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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 EB-11 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 STR-08 OMB-01

CEA-02 COME-00 FRB-02 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06 SIL-01

NIC-01 SAM-01 COA-02 DLOS-07 AGR-20 SWF-02 DRC-01

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R 171203Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3377

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 8101

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : ASEAN, TH

SUBJECT : THAI VIEWS OF THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE

REF: BANGKOK 8081

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: A MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OFFICIAL, WHO WAS PART OF THE THAI DELEGATION TO THE
ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE IN JAKARTA MAY 7-9,
SAID THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONFERENCE WERE MORE
SIGNIFICANT THAN THE ECONOMIC. HE DESCRIBED THE SPIRIT
OF THE CONFERENCE AS HIGHLY ENTHUSIASTIC, AND THE
ORGANIZATION AS STRONG, GROWING IN MATURITY, AND
DEVELOPING IN CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY. THESE CHARACT-
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TERISTICS HAD EARNED IT AN INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AND

RESPECT AS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE TALKS WITH THE EEC AND THE JAPANESE, AND BY THE COMBINED STAND ON CAMBODIA AT THE UNITED NATIONS. IN CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR'S FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE WHICH DISCUSSED POLITICAL ISSUES IN A FORMAL AND STIFF MANNER, THIS YEAR ALL DELEGATIONS DISCUSSED TOUGH POLITICAL TOPICS IN AN OPEN AND RELAXED FORUM, AND EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS AND FEARS HONESTLY. COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC ISSUES FOLLOW:

1. LAOS: THE THAI DELEGATION BRIEFED THE CONFERENCE ON THE SITUATION IN LAOS AND ASKED FOR SUPPORT FOR THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE CONFERENCE ISSUED A STRONG STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT BUT DEFERRED FURTHER DISCUSSION ON MEANS OF ASSISTANCE TO THE NEXT SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING. OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES INDICATED ASSISTANCE MIGHT BETTER BE OFFERED BILATERALLY. IN VIEW OF A NEWS REPORT THAT PHOUMI VONGVICHIT INDICATED HIS INTEREST IN HAVING LAOS JOIN ASEAN, THE LAO OBSERVER, KEO VIPHAKONE, WAS ASKED WHETHER LAOS WOULD APPROACH ASEAN FOR MEMBERSHIP. KEO DENIED THAT THE RLG WAS READY TO MAKE FORMAL APPLICATION FOR ASEAN MEMBERSHIP. KEO DESCRIBED LAOS AS THE LITTLE BROTHER OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES, DEPENDENT UPON THEM BUT AS YET TOO IMMATURE TO JOIN THEM.

2. CAMBODIA: THE INDONESIAN DELEGATION BRIEFED THE CONFERENCE ON THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA, AND THAILAND ADDED SOME COMMENTS. WHILE THE MINISTERS WERE SOMEWHAT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE STAYING POWER OF THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT, THE CONFERENCE AGREED TO SUPPORT IT AS THE LEGAL GOVERNMENT.

3. NEUTRALITY: THE CONFERENCE ACKNOWLEDGED THE PRINCIPLE OF A ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY BUT DID NOT DISCUSS IT. THE MALAYSIANS DID NOT PUSH THE IDEA AND IN UNSTATED AGREEMENT, THE CONFERENCE LEFT FURTHER DISCUSSION OF STRUCTURING THE NEUTRALITY PROPOSAL TO THE SENIOR OFFICIALS' MEETING TO BE HELD IN BANGKOK.

4. PRC: ALTHOUGH RELATIONS WITH THE SUPER POWERS WAS ON THE AGENDA, THE ONLY COVERAGE OF THIS ISSUE WAS THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MALAYSIAN ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT WOULD ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC). THE THAI OFFICIAL DESCRIBED THE MALAYSIANS AS RUSHING TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, THE THAI AS WILLING TO MOVE SLOWLY SINCE THE THAI ALREADY HAD EVERYTHING THEY WANTED FROM THE PRC, THE INDONESIANS AS HAVING MOVED AS FAR AWAY FROM THE PRC AS THEY WOULD AND PROBABLY NOW READY TO MOVE BACK, THE PHILIPPINES AS NOT REALLY CONCERNED

WITH ESTABLISHING RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, AND SINGAPORE AS HAVING STATED THAT IT WILL BE THE LAST OF THE ASEAN NATIONS TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PRC.

5. INDONESIA RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA: INDONESIA BRIEFED THE CONFERENCE ON ITS GROWING RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA, INCLUDING POSSIBLE MEMBERSHIP IN AN AUSTRALIAN-SPONSORED ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHWEST PACIFIC NATIONS. THE THAI OFFICIAL SAID MALAYSIA REQUESTED ALL ASEAN NATIONS TO DECLARE MEMBERSHIP IN ASEAN AS FIRST AND FOREMOST IN THEIR FOREIGN POLICY. THE PHILIPPINES QUICKLY DECLARED THAT THEY HAD MADE ASEAN THE PRIMARY FOCUS OF THEIR FOREIGN POLICY. THAILAND CLAIMED IT CONSIDERED ASEAN OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE, BUT IT ALSO HAD OTHER FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS, SUCH AS SEATO. THE CONFERENCE ACKNOWLEDGED INDONESIA'S SPECIAL ASSOCIATION WITH AUSTRALIA BUT ASKED THAT INDONESIA RESPECT ITS MEMBERSHIP IN ASEAN AND NOT ALLOW MEMBERSHIP IN ANY OTHER ASSOCIATION TO CONFLICT WITH ASEAN. INDONESIA ACCEPTED THIS POSITION.

6. ASEAN HEADQUARTERS: THE THAI OFFICIAL IMPLIED THAT THE OTHER ASEAN NATIONS BELIEVED THAT APPROVING JAKARTA AS THE HEADQUARTERS SITE WOULD TIE INDONESIA TO ASEAN RATHER THAN TO ANY OTHER ASSOCIATION, AND WAS ADDITIONALLY AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF INDONESIA AS THE LARGEST ASEAN COUNTRY BY VIRTUE OF ITS POPULATION.

7. PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGO RESOLUTION: THE PHILIPPINES ASKED THE CONFERENCE TO APPROVE IN PRINCIPLE ITS ARCHIPELAGO RESOLUTION FOR THE UPCOMING LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE. THE RESOLUTION ARGUED THAT IN ORDER TO PROTECT A NATION'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SECURITY, ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS MUST SURROUND ITS OUTERMOST ISLANDS.
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WHILE THE THAI DELEGATION COULD UNDERSTAND THE PHILIPPINE FEARS FOR THEIR NATIONAL SECURITY, THE THAI COULD NOT SUPPORT THE RESOLUTION SINCE IT WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT OF THEIR FISHING FLEETS, AND WOULD DISRUPT THE PRINCIPLE OF FREE SHIP PASSAGE WHICH THE THAI UPHOLD. THE PHILIPPINES OFFERED MOST FAVORED TREATMENT TO ASEAN SHIPPING BUT THE THAI OBJECTED SINCE FOREIGN BOTTOMS TRANSPORT MOST THAI GOODS. INDONESIA DID NOT PUSH THE PHILIPPINE RESOLUTION, MALAYSIA SAID NOTHING, SINGAPORE VICILLATED, AND WHEN THE THAI SAID THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT SUCH A POSITION, THE PHILIPPINES DROPPED THE FIGHT. THEREFORE, THE ASEAN DISCUSSION OF A JOINT POSITION FOR THE LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE ENDED IN A WISHY-WASHY STATEMENT THAT THE ASEAN NATIONS WOULD CONTINUE TO CONSULT AND COORDINATE THEIR POSTION PRIOR TO AND DURING THE

CONFERENCE.

8. ARBITRATION: THE THAI OFFICIAL SAID HE REGRETTED THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD NOT TAKEN MORE ACTION ON THE PHILIPPINE RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH A STRUCTURE WITHIN ASEAN TO ADJUDICATE DIFFERENCES. THE CONFERENCE AGREED ONLY ON THE DESIRABILITY OF SUCH A STRUCTURE.

9. ECONOMICS: THE THAI OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE DECISION TO ESTABLISH SOME MEANS WHICH WOULD GUARANTEE EXCHANGE OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES SUCH AS RICE, OIL, RUBBER, AND TIN BETWEEN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES WAS SIGNIFICANT, AND INDICATED THE DESIRE OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES TO BUILD TOWARD INTERDEPENDENCE.
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